The Progressive Review

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Unrigging America's elections

For a few months earlier this year it looked like the United States was headed for extreme constitutional confusion if not what the media likes to call a "constitutional crisis." The problem would have been precipitated by flaws in the American system of elections that, at the presidential level, include the baroque electoral college and the potential that the choice of president would be turned over to Congress -- or (to be more precise) the Supreme Court, as litigation would have inevitably flowed.

The potential for chaos was resolved by Ross Perot's decline in the polls and his temporary withdrawal from the race, but this serendipity in no way makes our electoral system any less of an accident waiting to happen. Nor any more fair. Once again, we were just lucky.

Nor is the problem limited to presidential contests. The country that calls itself the world's greatest democracy uses an electoral system so demonstrably undemocratic that even the former Soviet bloc looked elsewhere to find a way to vote.

The core of the problem is that our elections are based on the principle of first-past-the-post or winner-take-all. The winner need only be first, not necessarily the choice of the majority of voters. Nor is there any serious provision, except in rare instances, for political parties other than the two major ones. This latter defect has been elevated to a virtue by the assiduous obeisance paid it not only by representatives of the two parties but by the media as well, which quickly warns that any retreat from political duopoly will result in "instability," although it is not a phrase that springs to mind when one considers Germany, Norway, Switzerland and the Netherlands, all countries that use a multi-party system.

In fact, when you look at the major democracies of the world, including the new ones of the former Soviet bloc, you find that the United States is largely in the company of countries that once comprised the British Empire. Even here there are defections: New Zealand has recently moved towards proportional representation and Australia favors preferential voting.

The American system fails on a number of counts:

- **It does not provide for a majoritarian decision.** As just one example, both the present and former mayor of Washington were chosen with less than 35% of the vote in primaries that were tantamount to election.
- **It clearly discriminates against minorities and minority views.** The district system used for elections to the House, for example, has consistently produced under-representation of latinos and blacks, in the current House by as many as 37 seats. [See Progressive Review 299 for more on this]. The attempt to squeeze civil liberties into the district voting system has produced the degrading and ineffective anomaly of "minority districts," a sort of separate but equal politics, and guarantees decennial attempts at gerrymandering. Further, non-geographically defined minorities or under-represented groups --such as gays, women, Libertarians and Greens -- are often not helped by such artificial machinations. The present US Congress, for example, is only about 5% female as opposed to 8% in the legislature of Ireland, 12% in Italy, 18% in Austria and 36% in Norway.

It discourages voting. If you are a minority by race, sex or political inclination, there is little opportunity for your views to be heard, let alone represented under the American system. This contributes to the extraordinarily high level of voter apathy in the US compared to those with proportional representation.

It gives too much importance to personalities and too little to issues: With only two parties that pretend to represent the country's entire political spectrum, it is nearly impossible for either party to propose a coherent program or even a new idea. Too many intra-party compromises have to be made. Since the political parties don't have much ideological meaning, it is inevitable that

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The Progressive Review

Bucking the system since 1966

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American elections tend to focus excessively on the personalities of the candidates. We end up talking about draft dodging, for example, while avoiding any real debate over health care. If we had a multi-party system, it would be likely that at least one of those parties would have pushed for national health insurance this year, raising the visibility of an issue that the parties and the media would just as soon we didn't consider.

- **It is not flexible.** The genius of a well-working democracy is its ability to adapt to new social conditions and values. The first-past-the-post and district election system places an artificial barrier in the way of the country's politics adjusting to new social realities. When combined with election laws that are cynically protective of the existing major parties, these barriers become a broad moat around the status quo, almost guaranteeing that change will be dilatory and quarrelsome at best, and chaotic and violent at worse. For example, something like two-thirds of the American people think a new party would be a good idea, but there is absolutely no way under the present ground rules they are going to get one with any clout absent the collapse of one of the two major parties or a major political firestorm.

Fortunately, there are few constitutional bars to correcting this situation. The Constitution does not mandate congressional or legislative districts nor prevent the preferential election of senators. By state action, larger states could switch to proportional representation now. By congressional action, the House of Representatives could be enlarged -- despite our enormous population growth it's the same size as in 1910 -- to allow other states to do likewise.

While the electoral college would need to be abolished by constitutional amendment, nothing in the Constitution prevents the use of proportional representation in the selection of electors. In fact, the Constitution gives states considerable leeway in selecting the way it votes for federal officers.

Lots of choices

There are a variety of ways that America could improve its elections. Each of these ways has advocates who can verge on the fanatical. There are, as well, political scientists and statisticians who can offer comprehensive, if sometimes opaque, analyses of the effect of each of the systems, factoring in such matters as strategic voting (i.e. the voter trying to get an edge on the system through, say, bullet voting when several votes are allowed).

Then there are the non-objective considerations. Can the public understand the system? Does it seem intuitively fair? Whose ox gets gored?

New Zealand dealt with all these problems by naming a national commission to study and present to the public, in clear and unbiased fashion, the major alternatives. The result was an overwhelmingly favorable non-binding vote for the German system, which combines the virtues of the district system and proportional representation. On the other hand, France in 1986 handled the matter as pure politics. The Socialists killed PR because they thought they could do better with a run-off system.

Given the vagueness of the Constitution on the matter, however, we have the option of testing out various systems. One state might choice the German approach, another pure PR, another preferential voting and so forth. Presumably, over time, the virtues and defects of each would become clearer.

Any of the standard alternatives would more closely approximate real democracy than our present system, ending gerrymandering, giving more voice to minorities, increasing voter turnout and providing a forum for issues

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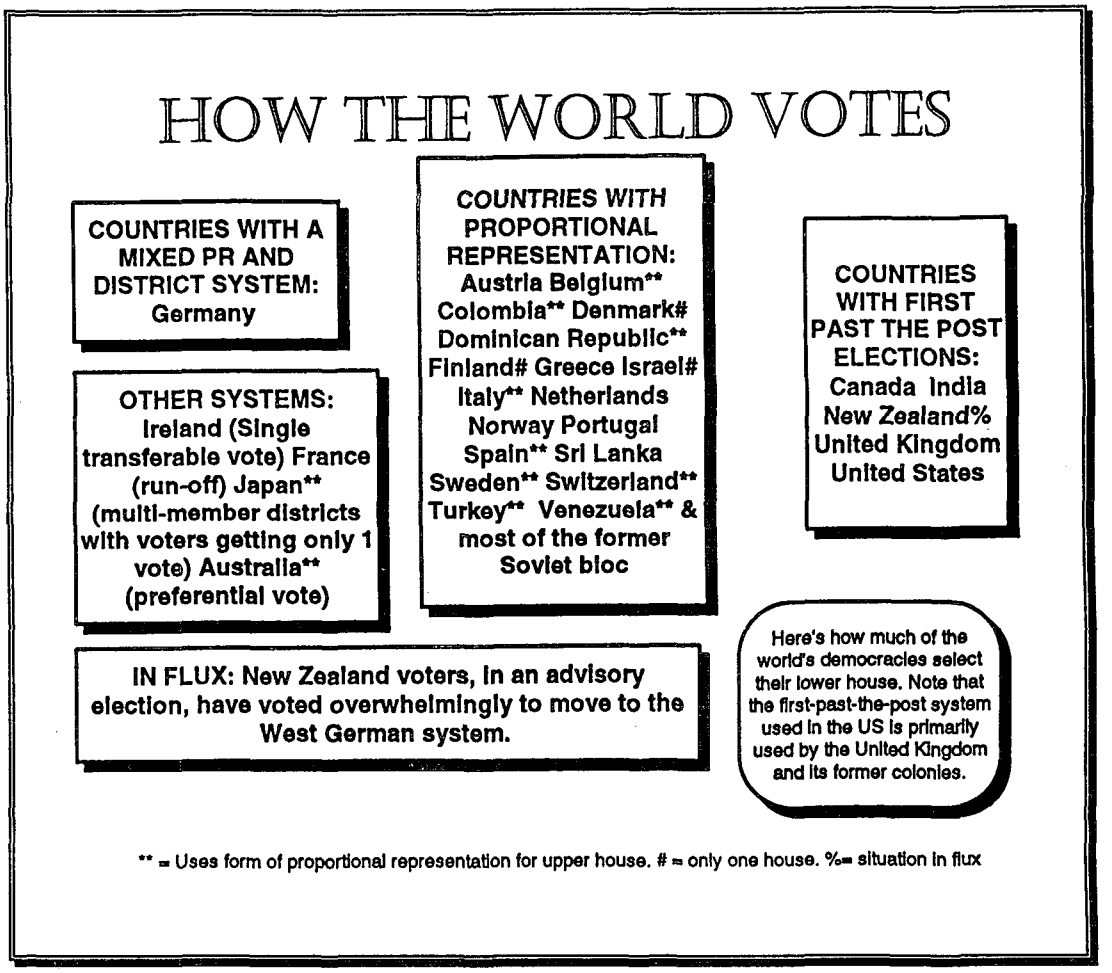
HOW THE WORLD VOTES
COUNTRIES WITH A MIXED PR AND DISTRICT SYSTEM: Germany
COUNTRIES WITH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION: Austria Belgium** Colombia** Denmark# Dominican Republic** Finland# Greece Israel# Italy** Netherlands Norway Portugal Spain** Sri Lanka Sweden** Switzerland** Turkey** Venezuela** & most of the former Soviet bloc
COUNTRIES WITH FIRST PAST THE POST ELECTIONS: Canada India New Zealand% United Kingdom United States
OTHER SYSTEMS: Ireland (Single transferable vote) France (run-off) Japan** (multi-member districts with voters getting only 1 vote) Australia** (preferential vote)
IN FLUX: New Zealand voters, in an advisory election, have voted overwhelmingly to move to the West German system.
Here's how much of the world's democracies select their lower house. Note that the first-past-the-post system used in the US is primarily used by the United Kingdom and its former colonies.
** = Uses form of proportional representation for upper house. # = only one house. %= situation in flux

not heard about in our current two-party campaigns.

Single office contests

To understand the alternatives it helps to make a distinction between single-office contests (the presidency or mayor of a city) and multi-seat contests (Congress or a city council). Here are the major alternatives for single-office contests:

First-past-the-post: This is our current system. Under it, in a three-way race, for example, the winner might theoretically get as few as 33.5% of the votes.

Run-offs: In a single-office contest, even a run-off system -- as used in the America south and in France -- is at least arguably better than the first-past-the-post now common in the US. One of the major problems with run-offs, however, is the expense of holding a second election and the fall-off in voter turnout for it.

Preferential voting (also called the alternative vote): In the classic system of preferential voting, if no one wins a majority of the votes, the votes of the least successful candidate are redistributed according to his or her supporters' second choice. Let us imagine that an election produced the following results:

Karen South:	370
Kwami East:	340
Sarah North:	220
Bill West:	70

Under the current system, South would be the winner even though she fell quite short of a majority (501). In typical preferential voting, the votes of West would be redistributed according to their second choice. Since this would still not produce a majority for any candidate the votes of Sarah North would be redistributed in like manner. Given the closeness of the race, either South or East might win in this instance.

There is a variation of preferential voting known as the Bucklin System. In it, if there is no clear winner, all the second place votes of all the candidates are added to the first place votes.

Approval voting: Under this system, used by a few professional associations, but as yet untested in a major political context, voters get to check off every candidate of whom they approve, but not in order of preference. Advocates claim this produces a fairer result, although there is the practical question of whether voters wouldn't rather rank the candidates.

Multi-seat elections

Here are the major choices for multi-seat elections:

District and at-large elections: These typically American forms of election are responsible for many of the least appealing aspects of US politics. The main virture of district voting is that the district has someone with power at the seat of government. But it also leads to gerrymandering, minority disenfranchisement and intensely parochial decisions on the part of legislators. The

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SYSTEMS OF VOTING

Here are the major voting systems used by democracies around the world.

FIRST PAST THE POST: The system used by the UK and other former members of the British Empire. Can easily result in a candidate being elected with less than a majority

MIXED MEMBER PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM: A mixture of voting for candidates by district (either first past the post or preferentially) and those elected by proportional representation. The latter seats determine the final seating in the legislature. For example, if the Sunny Day Party won 10 of 50 district seats but 30% of the total vote it would get 20 additional seats in a 100-member legislature

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION: In classic form voters choose from party lists and the legislature is determined by the proportional number of votes each party gets. There are a number of variations including the single transferable vote (similar to preferential voting) which allows voters to choose individually among the various parties' candidates

APPROVAL VOTING: A system in which voters get to vote for every candidate of whom they approve

PREFERENTIAL VOTING: Voters choose in order of preference. If not enough candidates get the required number of votes, votes for the candidates with the least votes are transferred to their supporter's next choice until candidates meet their quota.

BUCKLIN SYSTEM: Similar to preferential voting except if no candidate gets a majority, all 2nd place votes are added to the 1st place votes and so forth until a majority is determined.

RUN-OFF ELECTIONS: If no one gets a majority in the first election a run-off is held between the top two choices. Used primarily in France and the southern US.

typical legislator spends more time fixing problems for consituents than acting as a legislator. At-large elections, in which the voter has as many choices as there are seats available, leads to the majority of a community magnifying its power to the exclusion of minorities, and has been subject to successful assault in the courts on civil rights grounds.

Proportional representation: Typically, various parties produce lists of candidates between which the public chooses. These lists can be either "open" or "closed." In the latter, the party determines the order of the candidates, in the former voters have some influence. Under PR, if the Sunny Day party wins 45% of the vote, it gets 45% of the seats in the legislature. In most cases the legislature is broken up into multi-member districts, within which the proportional representation occurs, allowing PR and regional concerns to work in tandem.

Single Transferable Vote: This is essentially the principle of preferential voting applied to a multi-member body. Voters rank the candidates and those surpassing a mathematically derived quota are considered elected. To determine the other victors, the choices of the least successful candidate are distributed to the other candidates. This is the system used for years in Cambridge, MA, and in Ireland.

Mixed proportional representation: This is the system used in Germany in which half the legislature is selected by district and half by PR.

Getting there

Strange as proportional representation seems to many, it has a history in this country going back to the progressive era when nearly two dozen cities used it -- including New York, Sacramento, and Cleveland. It disappeared not because it was ineffective, but because the urban elites didn't like it, just as the French socialists killed PR in their country because they thought they could gain more power without it.

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The story of Cincinnati is instructive. Theodore Berry, a black member of the Cincinnati city council won election in 1953 under proportional representation. Because he was the highest vote-getter among councilmembers, by local tradition he should have become mayor but his election was blocked. In 1957, opponents of Berry convinced the city to do away with PR entirely. Berry was finally elected mayor under a conventional voting system in the 1970s, more than a decade after a major American city could have had its first black mayor.

Similar resistance has cropped up in New Zealand. New Zealand recently voted by a 70% margin in an advisory election to adopt the German system of mixed PR. This plan was initially opposed by the government, but after the election the prime minister said he would not block a final referendum on the matter. Later, however, he announced that a vote for the new system would be linked to a highly controversial plan for public financing of campaigns, thus lowering chances of final approval.

Any campaign for electoral reform can expect to be met by similar machinations. Yet the effort must be made if the varied voices of America are to be heard.

Advocates of change repeatedly go down the futile path of attempting to win under existing rules, with surprisingly little effort directed at changing the rules.

The ways in which government rigs the rules for elections is mind-boggling. There is a whole newsletter, *Ballot Access News,* devoted to following the efforts by citizen groups to overturn them -- challenging petition requirements, filing deadlines, registration rules, and so forth. These gimmicks, keep in mind, are all in addition to the fundamental inequities created by the first-past-the-post and district election system.

Yet there is no greater hope than that in the heart of one who dreams of a third party. So to recount these problems often brings a glaze over the listener's eyes or even the suspicion that one is a secret agent of the status quo. One doesn't enter third party politics without a fervent faith in one's cause, shored up by the belief that someday millions will share it.

Maybe. But first you have to get on the ballot. And while some third party efforts, notably the Greens and the Libertarians, have been quite pragmatic and imaginative in choosing where and when they will run, the general tendency is to underrate the importance of one of the first rules we learned on the playground when we were kids: before you play the game, make sure the rules are fair. -- *Sam Smith*

GETTING INVOLVED

A new organization has formed to confront directly the underlying inequities of the American electoral system. Citizens for Proportional Representation -- which produces the apt acronym CPR! -- describes its function as "resuscitating democracy through informed debate about the merits of proportional representation and other alternatives to our current, first-past-the-post electoral system." The chair is Matthew Cossolotto, a corporate executive and the author of *The Almanac of Transatlantic Politics.* Its board includes the director of the Iowa Women's Equality Campaign, a staffer from AFSCME, and a former president of Ohio University board of trustees. The advisory board includes former presidential candidate John Anderson, *New Yorker* executive editor Hendrick Hertzberg, Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers, *National Interest* executive editor Michael Lind, Eleanor Smeal of the Fund for the Feminist Majority and your editor.

These names illustrate the range of people concerned about this issue. This is not a radical or even a partisan movement, but one directed at ending a tradition of legalized political corruption and creating fundamental fairness in our electoral system.

To get involved contact Citizens for Proportional Representation, PO Box 11166, Alexandria VA 22312 (703-914-0205)

Double-teaming Bush

George Bush kept saying during the campaign that we had to admit our mistakes and then move on. Therefore I confess that I said in the June issue that Bill Clinton had about as much chance as Walter Mondale or Michael Dukakis.

Seeking explanation if not expatiation for this sizable miscalculation, I went back over the recent orgy of disingenuousness that passed as a presidential campaign to see just where I went astray. It seems that I, albeit not alone, had badly underrated the importance of Perot. In fact, the election was probably decided in March once Perot began being taken seriously as a possible candidate. Since last March, whether Ross Perot was running or not, there were really only two candidates: George Herbert Walker Bush and H. Bill Bushnot. As the chart on the next page shows, when Perot began to be taken into account, the anti-Bush vote jumped 15% and remained within a narrow range for most of the rest of the electoral season It appears that Perot made it respectable to reject Bush and once voters had done that, they never came back. After that, it was just a matter of double-teaming the president.

Of course, there are other explanations. There is, for example, a small but highly quoted coterie of academics who believe in political predestination. While their systems vary, they all come down to considering factors over which the voter has little control such as the growth in the GNP during the past 3 1/2 quarters. Since such analysis renders political coverage (not to mention the voter) superfluous, any self-respecting journalist must reject it out of hand, no matter what the empirical evidence.

The Vichy Democrats will undoubtedly argue that the results prove the virtue of nominating a conservative, but they are left with the problem of explaining why Clinton got a smaller percentage of the popular vote than the ever-disdained Michael Dukakis. Even when you add in those voters who say they would have voted for Clinton if Perot had not been in the race, Clinton does about 3 percentage points better than Dukakis, hardly a

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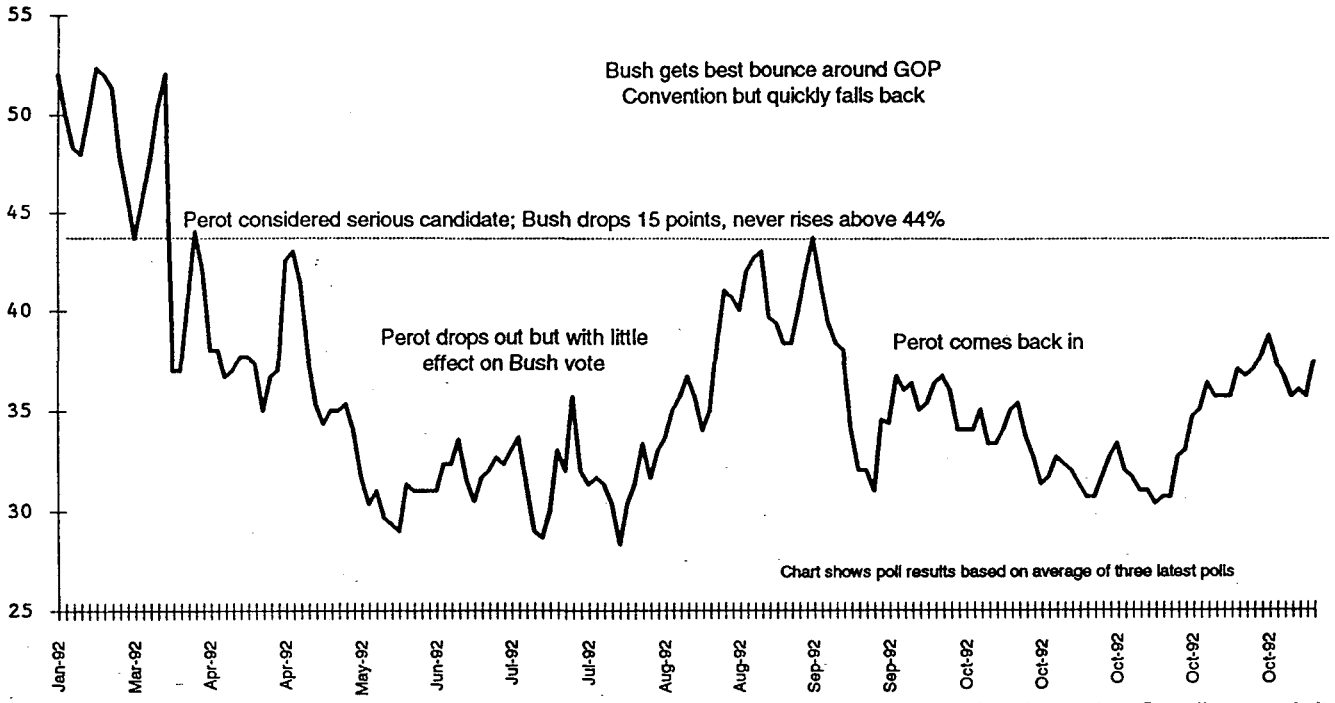
THE BUSH VOTE



This chart shows the dramatic effect on the Bush candidacy when Perot began being taken serious last spring. Once Perot made it respectable to be anti-Bush, many voters never came back whether Perot was in the race or not.

justification for dumping much of the liberal Democratic tradition.

It is more likely that Bill Clinton won this election much as George Bush "won" the Cold War -- by being in the right place at the right time. The combination of a resilliant recession and a recurring Ross Perot was a gift of considerable fortune.

In the end, this election may have really been more a psychological event than a political one. It was, I think, about America growing up. Ronald Reagan told us we could go back to the past; George Bush said we could keep things just like they are, and be glad of it. They were both lies but it took us 12 years to find out. When it finally happened, the voters not only dumped Bush, but in various referenda turned their backs on the third Great Awakening -- rejecting anti-gay and anti-women measures. As in the 18th and 19th centuries, the evangelical politics of the recent past had run its course and the country was ready to face the future.

So now we're moving again. It may be productive, it could be fun and it certainly will be interesting. But fasten your seatbelts; it's going to be a bumpy ride. -- *s.s.*

■

Tanker piracy is on the rise in SE Asian waters, with more than 40 attacks so far this year. According to the *Oil & Gas Journal,* pirates board, tie up the crew, take what they want and then leave the vessel out of control.

WEATHER REPORT

Drug busts

A study by the Parents Resource Institute for Drug Education indicatesthat drug use among students in grades 9 to 12 is up in all categories except pot, cocaine and wine coolers. For junior high school students, there was a 20% increase in LSD use over the previous year, 15% for cocaine and seven percent for marijuana. The White House tried unsuccessfully to dissuade the group (which gets federal funds) from releasing the data during the election campaign. [SS1]

Despite the "war on drugs," emergency room visits by cocaine users hit a record high in the first three months of this year. *The New York Times* quotes Mark Kleiman, a drug expert at Harvard University, as saying that the administration has focussed almost exclusively on casual

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users and "failed to address the fundamental problem." He noted that 20% of the country's drug users consume 80% of the cocaine and heroin that are smuggled in. Said Kleiman: "The only thing I hear the president saying is that things are wonderful because the number of self-reported cocaine users among adolescents is down. But this is a meaningless news statistic. The number of adolescents who use cocaine has always been tiny. In fact, it is so tiny that it can't even be accurately measured."

Just politics

You will remember that in the recent campaign, Clinton' bragged about balancing the state budget eleven times. What he didn't say is that one of the ways he did it was by appealing a state supreme court decision which said that Arkansas had an unqualified obligation to repay $40 million to retirees who were taxed illegally. While the case is before the US Supreme Court, the $40 million is off the state's books. [SS2]

Peter Teeley, press secretary to then Vice President George Bush said once: "You can say anything you want during a debate and 80 million people hear it. [If the newspapers later correct the record] so what? Maybe 200 people read it or 2000 or 20,000."

[SS3][SS4]

Those wishing to reach Clinton by e-mail can try hq@campaign92.org. Those who don't understand the last sentence should ignore it.

Petra Kelly was not only a leader of the European green movement (although she had distanced herself from increasingly pragmatic Green politics in recent years) but had a profound effect on the development of the American green movement as well. After Kelly and the West German Greens won 27 seats in the German Parliament in 1983, a formal Green movement was started here.

Add to the list of Clinton stories buried by the major media: a *Washington Times* report of Clinton's friends removing his ROTC files in 1974, when he was about to run for Congress.

The mediacracy

One of the most interesting, if not the most significant, stories of the campaign got only minor mention in the major media. By the time it broke, journalists had all but elected Clinton president and were busy positioning themselves as responsible analysts of President Clinton, a task which involves, among other things, avoiding anything in conflict with the seminal mythology of the Clinton era.

When a candidate for president is merely that there are few stories that are off-limits. But let the candidate actually become president (or appear to be headed that way) and responsible Washington journalists know better than to bite the hand that will be feeding them over the next four years.

Thus Gennifer Flowers, whose initial tale inspired considerable if often uninformative media attention when Clinton was merely a presidential hopeful, found herself blacked out when she provided details of her affair with Clinton -- not to mention considerable photographic detail of herself -- in the December issue of *Penthouse.*

It was not that official Washington was bored with the story. Newsstands were inundated with requests, and copies were faxed along the campaign trail. But with a few exceptions -- such as the conservative *Washington Times* -- the story got little further.

Why should a story of such interest to official Washington be deemed not suitable for the average American reader? Aside from the Clinton biases of the press (documented as early as last February when a survey of campaign reporters found that 90% favored the Arkansas governor), aside from standard pre-administration awe, aside from a there-but-the-grace-of-God-go-I cautiousness on the part of a press that wouldn't want public note of its own escapades on the campaign trail, aside from an inconsistent and inchoate sense of journalistic priggishness in such matters, there is the argument that the Flowers story didn't make it on standard journalistic grounds. It was, to use the favorite journalistic patois, unsubstantiated.

This, for example, was the implication of the earlier *Washington Post* coverage despite tape recorded conversations between Flowers and Clinton (the contents of which the *Post* kept from its readers). While the tapes released at that time did not clearly indicate that Clinton and Flowers had engaged in an affair, they did explicitly indicate that Flowers and Clinton were trying to cover up *something* and the tapes certainly did not increase one's confidence in Clinton's behavior in a pinch.

The *Penthouse* story does contain a large number of unsubstantiated comments by Flowers ranging from particular sexual positions allegedly used to the somewhat poignant admission that they rarely resulted, for her, in an orgasm. The *Penthouse* story also makes it difficult to develop a great deal of sympathy for Flowers; her mutuality with Clinton seeming to extend to a taste for personal manipulation.

The story by Art Harris is revealing and instructive, however, even if every statement of Flowers herself is ignored:

- Harris found that Flowers' mother, ex-roommate and even a former boyfriend could confirm the existence of a relationship far beyond the casual acquaintanceship that the Clinton spinmeisters would have us believe. It should be noted that none of these people expressed fondness for Flowers' behavior.
- *Penthouse* reports that the tapes --recorded by Flowers in 1990 and 1991 -- were authenticated by an independent forensic audio expert.

Here is a sample of Clinton on the tapes:

[From 1990: Flowers asks him if he is going to run for president]: I want to but I don't want to be blown out of the water with this. I don't see how they can hurt me so far. If they don't have pictures of me and *** if no one says anything. Or even if someone says something, they don't have much.

[From 1991: With Clinton running for president, the Flowers rumors are heating up again]: If they ever hit you with it, just say no and go on. There's nothing they can do... I just think if everyone's on record denying it, you got no problems.

FLOWERS: why would they waste their money and time

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coming down here?

CLINTON: They're gonna try and run this. [But if] everybody kinda hangs tough, they're just not gonna do anything. They can't. They can't run a story like that unless somebody says, 'Yeah, I did it.'

- Harris also reports that on "another tape they discuss how she might turn double agent and attempt to entrap the local Republicans who had approached her with a reported $50,000 to go public." She also phoned Clinton to ask him to help her get out of town before reporters began digging into how she got her state job. Clinton promised to help.
- Clinton got her a $17,500-a-year job in the state government under circumstances arguable enough that the black woman passed over for the post filed a successful grievance in the matter.
- Medical records indicate that Flowers became pregnant at the approximate time that she says Clinton made her so. She claims to have aborted the child.

Of course, the question is: does it matter? Back when the Gary Hart story broke, a public relations man suggested how he could have handled the scandal: put up billboards featuring photos of FDR, Eisenhower, JFK and Hart. Underneath would be the single phrase: HART: IN A GREAT TRADITION.

Still the Flowers story, and the way Clinton has handled it, goes directly to concerns about the man. There are times when Clinton's version of his past reminds you of the Raymond Chandler character: "smart, smooth and no good." Like the draft flap, it was not what he did but how he handled what he did that troubles. Tracking a Clinton explanation, whether of past actions or present policy, is like trying to dance on a floor covered with marbles. As Paul Greenberg of the *Little Rock Democrat Gazette* put it: "Bill Clinton *is* a presidential debate."

Further, the media can't have it both ways. If it merely reported on the public actions of politicians there would be a strong argument for avoiding a story like Flowers'. But that it isn't the way it happens. The Washington media consistently panders to the mythmakers of the White House, regardless of administration, creating a halcyon, virtuous, lovable and false image of our top leaders. Only an incident as rare and extraordinary as Watergate, or a touch as bumbling as that of Dan Quayle can force a break with this tradition. If the recipe for Barbara Bush's or Hillary Clinton's chocolate chip cookies is important, then at least equally true the tale of Gennifer Flowers. If it's okay for the children of a politician to be up on the nationally televised stage, why not the politician's mistress as well?

It is probable that the media, deep down, does not believe that the American people are wise enough to be trusted with the truth that their leaders are often not what they would seem. The result is an expurgated version of politics which creates the very sort of lie the media claims to be protecting us from -- *s.s.*

The idea mill

Washington DC is giving consideration to permitting "granny flats," or accessory apartments, in areas previously zoned for single-family dwellings. Some 40% of the nation's counties permit such apartments, which are often considerably cheaper than conventional apartments. The idea is an inexpensive way to make more housing available and help homeowners carry their mortgages.

The new world order

Could you explain that again? When asked how a $5.6 billion sale of F16s could possibly be considered consistent with the language of a U.S.-Chinese communique calling for a gradual reduction in arms sales to Taiwan, Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger explained: "The 1982 communique with the PRC called for restraint on arms sales to Taiwan. This decision continues to demonstrate the restraint we have shown since signing the communique. We have always reserved the right to replace obsolete, inoperable and out-of-production equipment with current production models. This is what we are doing in this case.'

When pressed further, Eagleburger replied: "I don't want to get into a numbers game with you. We have lived up to the communique, and as I have told you, the President has said this decision does not change our commitment... The President's decision will contribute to continued stability and therefore provide further basis for the rapidly growing exchanges between Taiwan and the PRC." Huh? -- *Arms Sales Monitor*

ROADSIGNS

Budget

Total of all of Reagan's and Bush's budgets as a percent of final budgets approved by Congress. 99.94%

Civil liberties

Number of phone customers' records searched by the Cincinnati police at the request of Proctor & Gamble, which was trying to trace a news leak to the *Wall Street Journal:* 800,000

Number of subpoenas issued in the last year for telephone records of NYNEX, New England Telephone and Pacific Bell: 27,863

Drugs

Inmates in California prisons: 2000 in 1980; 20,000 in 1990.

Percent of California prisoners with a substance abuse problem: 80%

Percent receiving treatment: 10%

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Ecology

Increase since 1960 in garbage due to packaging: 200%

Percent of warmest years of last century that occurred in the 1980s: 100%

Millions of Americans who live in areas that exceed ozone pollution standards set by the EPA: 80

Percent of chemicals sprayed on crops for beautification as opposed to increasing yields or quality: 80%

Percent of crops average farmer lost to pests before pesticides: 33%

Percent of crops average farmer lost to pests after pesticides: 33%

Average miles an item of food travels in the US before it is eaten: 1200

American land paved with concrete or asphalt annually: 2000 acres.

Number of the world's animals that become extinct each day: 2

Decline in blue bird population in past 20 years: 90%

Economics

Minimum wage: $4.25

Minimum wage as a percentage of the hourly wage needed to keep a family of four at the poverty line: 61%

Average welfare benefit converted to an hourly rate: $2.29.

Education

Percent of Chicago parents who say their schools are operating better under elected school councils that have the power to set budgets and hire and fire their own principals: 80%

Politics

Percentage of young people who think the US needs major changes: 87%

Percent of likely voters who could identify Millie, the White House dog: 86%

Percent of likely voters who could identify Murphy Brown: 89%

Number who could identify Casper Weinberger as the Reagan administration cabinet member recently indicted in the Iran-contra investigation: 19%

Percent who knew that both Bush and Clinton support the death penalty: 15%

Voters' view of where defense, welfare and foreign aid rank as federal budget items: (1) foreign aid (2) welfare and (3) defense.

Actual rank: (1) defense, (2)welfare and (3)foreign aid

Transportation

Percent of nation's 82 million bicyclists who say they would commute to work by bicycle if there were safe bike lanes on roads or separate designated paths: 50%

Percent of Americans who would like plans that include walking, running or biking as an integral part of their local transportation system. 72%

SOURCES: Budget: The Nation; Civil Liberties: The Nation 10/26/92; Drugs: Families Against Mandatory Minimums; Ecology: National Student News Service; Economics: Women's Journal-Advocate; Education: Mother Jones; Politics: MTV Rock the Vote Survey, Dept. of Communications, UMass/Amherst; Transportation: Rodale Press

FIELD NOTES

GROUPS

Families Against Mandatory Minimums, which was organized to oppose draconian sentences, largely for drug offenses, has now more than 8000 members nationwide. You can join by writing FAMM at 1001 Penna. Ave NW #200S, DC 20004.

READING

What's New with the BTUs: Informative newsletter on energy issues. $24 for 12 issues from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Puerto Rico & Caribbean Section, PO Box 10914, Caparra Station, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00922.

The Passionate Attachment: America's Involvement with Israel, 1947 to the Present: by former Undersecretary of State George W. Ball and his son Douglas B. Ball. A critical survey of US-Israel relations. [Norton, $22.95]

The War on Drugs and Civil Liberties: A report on the effect the War on Drugs has had on civil liberties. $4 from the Cato Institute, 224 Second St. SE DC 20003.

Does Farmland Protection Pay? a 38-page report from the American Farmland Trust summarizes two years of research in Massachusetts communities, which found that farmland more than pays its way in property taxes. Residential development, on the other hand, was found to require more funds than it raised. For example, for every dollar raised by residential revenues, the study area spent $1.12 in public services. For farm and open land, the figure was 33 cents. $10 from American Farmland Trust, 1920 N Street NW #400, DC 20036. 202-659-5170.

The Quayle Quarterly: One of the things we're going to miss under the new regime is not having the *Quayle Quarterly* to read. This publication will publish its last issue in January. In its place, co-editor is planning a woman's humor magazine to be called *hysteria. Submissions can be sent to* Deborah Werksman, *c/o hysteria,* Box 8581 Brewster Station, Bridgeport, CT 06605.

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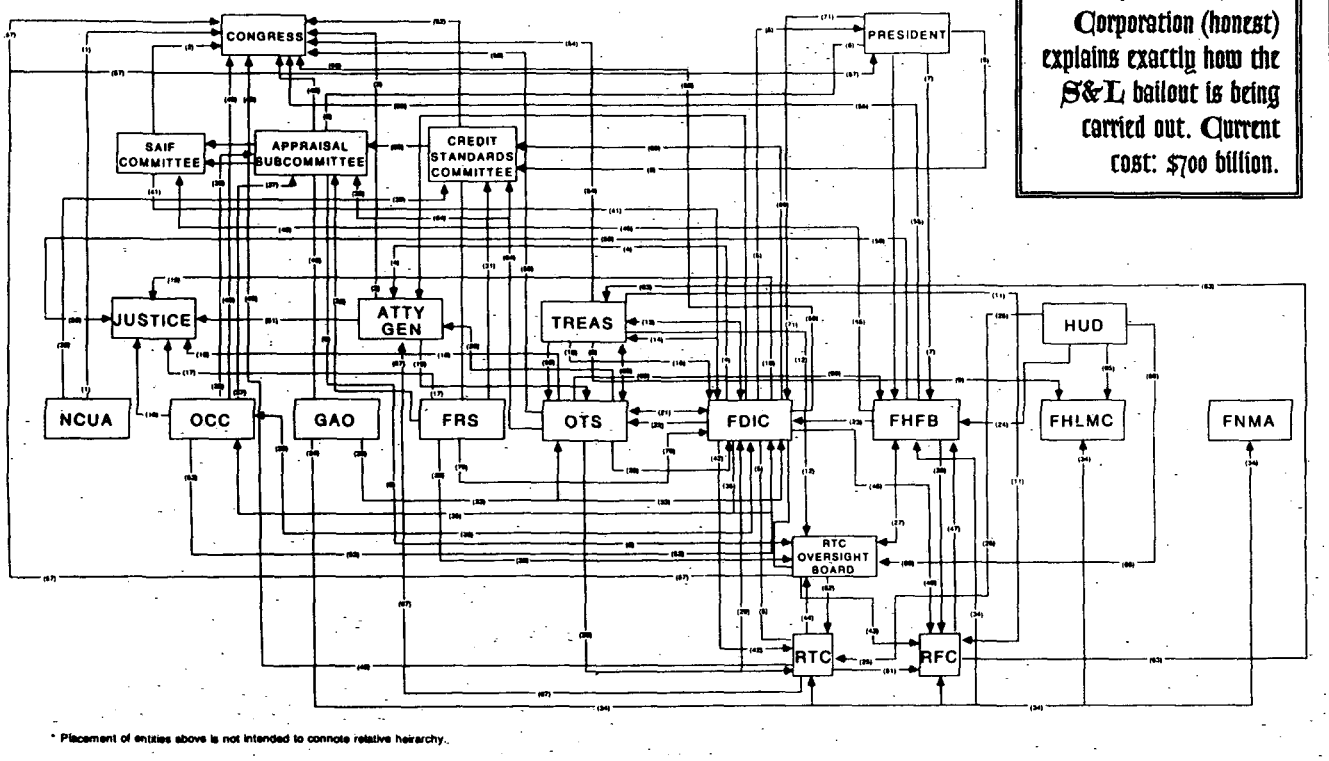

* Placement of entities above is not intended to connote relative heirarchy.

This chart, from the Resolution Trust Corporation (honest) explains exactly how the S&L bailout is being carried out. Current cost: $700 billion.

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